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COMMUNICATION OF 13 MAY 1998 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRALIA TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Attached is a communication received from the Permanent Mission of Australia, forwarding a statement by the Prime Minister of Australia, for the information of Member States.

For reasons of economy, this document has been printed in a limited number.

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AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY and
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13 May 1998

Mr Muttusamy Sanmuganathan
Secretary
Secretariat, Policy-Making Organs
IAEA
VIENNA

Dear Mr Sanmuganathan

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the attached statement of 12 May by the Australian Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, circulated as an information document to the Member States.

Yours sincerely

(Ian Biggs)
Alternate Resident Representative

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INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTS

STATEMENT BY MR JOHN HOWARD, PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

India's action in conducting three underground nuclear tests is an ill-judged step which could have most damaging consequences for security in south Asia and globally.

Australia has a direct security interest in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Indian tests are in flagrant defiance of the international community's strong support for nuclear non-proliferation and opposition to nuclear testing. To date, 186 countries are party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and 149 countries have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

India's neighbours will naturally be concerned about the tests but a nuclear arms race is not the way to address the issue of maintaining stability in south Asia. The Government urges them not to respond in ways which would further destabilise security in the region.

The Foreign Minister has called in the Indian High Commissioner today to convey our condemnation of the tests in the strongest possible terms. The same message will be registered by our High Commission in New Delhi.

The Government is recalling our High Commissioner from New Delhi for consultations. Further action will be decided in light of those consultations and discussions with other countries which share our concern.

12 May 1998